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Go, teach all Nations.—Matt. xxviii. 19.

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## SERMON X.

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### THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

ACTS II. 1.—*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

THE Pentecost was an annual religious festival of the Jews, designed to commemorate the promulgation of the law from Mount Siani. It was instituted fifty days after Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage;—a circumstance from which it seems to have derived its name. And it is worthy of notice, that the Pentecost alluded to in the text, was on the Sabbath—fifty days from the resurrection of Christ.

Perhaps few pages of the sacred history can afford the believer either more satisfaction or profit, than the one which exhibits the events of that memorable day.

After glancing at those events, we shall be prepared to contemplate some of the important instruction they afford.

The hundred and twenty disciples were assembled for prayer and religious conference. And the twelve were doubtless expecting a speedy fulfilment of their Lord's promise,—*that they should be endued with power from on high.* Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, which rested upon each of them. Immediately they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in languages with which they had previously been unacquainted. These facts being published through Jerusalem, drew around them crowds of astonished hearers. In this multitude were men from at least sixteen different countries or provinces, and of as many different languages or dialects. The disciples addressed the whole, in their varied tongues, on the great subject of salvation.

Some seem to have been satisfied as to the *reality* of the miracle, and yet in doubt as to the *design* of it. And they said one to

another, *What meaneth this?* Others, in a spirit of stubborn unbelief and of malice, ridiculed the whole, and pronounced the disciples intoxicated.

But the disciples were not to be silenced by ridicule. In God they felt strong. Peter, standing up with the eleven, addressed the multitude with calmness, with plainness, and power. He showed that the events they now witnessed were in perfect accordance with the prophecy; were in fact an exact fulfilment of a prediction of the prophet Joel. He then proceeded to charge upon them the crime of murdering the Son of God; and to bear public testimony to his resurrection, and his exaltation to the right hand of God's throne. *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. This Jesus hath God raised up; whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

This plain and bold address, carried to the conscience and heart by an omnipotent Spirit, was overwhelming. The voice of derision was hushed; and on every side broke forth the momentous inquiry, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Taught by the Holy Ghost, the apostle urged at once the duty of repentance; and encouraged even the chief of sinners to hope for forgiveness, by a reference to the gracious promises of God. The result was that on that day, three thousand were added to the disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Such was the day of Pentecost; such the triumphant entrance of the apostles on the great work of evangelizing the world. We are now,

TO CONTEMPLATE SOME OF THE IMPORTANT INSTRUCTION, WHICH THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THAT OCCASION AFFORD.

1. In the occurrences of the day of Pentecost, we discover evidence of a SPECIAL DIVINE INFLUENCE.

The idea is too prevalent, that the agency of the Supreme is only of a general character. It is denied that he imparts any important influence at one time more than at another. It is supposed, in a word, that the repentance and salvation of sinners are brought about independently of any *direct* agency on the part of God.

Such views are manifestly at variance with the general testimony of the bible, and very pointedly discountenanced by the

page before us. Through the whole chain of events here detailed, we perceive clear evidence of God's *special* agency. Such evidence is furnished by the fact that the apostles were instantaneously endued with extraordinary gifts of speech. They spake with other tongues, *as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Most convincing evidence of a special divine influence is found, also, in the *effects* produced upon the day of Pentecost. Prejudices the most violent were overcome. Hostility to the christian faith the most rancorous was allayed. An important revolution was effected in the character and conduct of three thousand. And the only visible means of producing those astonishing effects was the plain preaching of the apostles. Independently of divine aid, they spake, too, under very peculiar disadvantages. They had none of the accomplishments of learning, and none of the influence of wealth and rank. They were regarded as a company of unenlightened and deluded adherents to a system of religious heresy. By many they were pitied. By more they were despised. The violence of malignant feeling which led to the crucifixion of their Lord had not yet subsided; and they also were in danger of a similar martyrdom. At the same time they inculcated a religion directly at variance with the natural disposition and established prejudices of their hearers.

Contemplating, therefore, the effects produced under such circumstances, we can rationally account for them, only by admitting that the special agency of God was concerned. And those effects, corroborated as they have since been by the experience of millions turned from darkness to light, furnish invincible proof that there is a secret divine influence sometimes diffused over the soul of man, which gives to the gospel of truth a convincing and transforming power. An influence it is, with which stands connected the salvation of the rebellious. And it is imparted or withheld according to the sovereign pleasure of him who governs in the heavens.

2. The occurrences of the day of Pentecost confirmed THE DIVINE MISSION OF JESUS, AND THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

Whilst on earth, the Lord Jesus gave abundant evidence that he was from God. His numerous and well attested *miracles* were so many unanswerable proofs, that he actually possessed the high character which he claimed. The *resurrection* of Jesus gave new and still stronger testimony to the divinity of his mission, and the truth of his doctrine.

The unbelieving Jews seemed to regard the event of Christ's *death*, as sufficient evidence that he was an *impostor*. *If thou BE*

*the Son of God*, said they, with mingled feelings of incredulity and contempt, *come down from the cross. He saved others, himself he cannot save. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him.* And though the fact of his resurrection, according to his own prediction, was established by the clearest testimony, still the leading Jews must pretend, that deception had been practised. They persuaded the multitude that the disciples came by night and stole him away. It remained for the events of another day to give testimony to his divine mission, the force of which enmity itself could not resist. Those events were the occurrences of the day of Pentecost. They were an exact and obvious fulfilment of a prediction, or promise of the Savior. He encouraged his disciples to expect, that they would be *endued with special power from on high.* They were thus endued. Of the fact there was such proof as to convince assembled thousands; and among them the very murderers of their Lord.

If Jesus were an impostor, whence so wonderful a coincidence betwixt his promise and events which took place after his ascension to heaven? We have seen, too, that the peculiar powers possessed by the disciples, and the effects they produced, can be rationally ascribed to nothing short of the special agency of God. And will Jehovah lend his special aid for the support of an impostor, and the propagation of falsehood?

Tell us not, then, that this Jesus, whom we preach, and follow and trust for immortal life, was a blasphemous pretender, when he *thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* The record of his miracles, the event of his resurrection, and the signal fulfilment of his last promises of love, all demonstrate that he actually possessed that divine dignity which he claimed. Tell us not that the christian system is a base fabrication. The very marked interference of God for its defence on the day of Pentecost assures us that it is from himself, and is true. And with such evidence of its divine origin, we will listen to its instructions; we will place entire confidence in its promises; we will cherish its thrilling hopes as our blessed portion for eternity.

3. The occurrences of the day of Pentecost exhibit THE FOLLY OF OPPOSITION TO THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

We say nothing now concerning the *guilt* of those who array their talents, learning, influence, and possessions against the cause of God's Anointed. We say nothing of the *woes* which will accumulate along the path of their future existence. We see stamped on such opposition a character of *folly*, as well as of crime and peril.

Had the success of the christian cause, in its commencement, been dependent on the few and feeble disciples of our Lord, its foes might justly have hoped at once to crush it. And were its future success, amid a world in rebellion, dependent exclusively on the resources of either men or angels, we might well despair of its universal triumph, and even indulge the most trembling anticipation. But the cause is supported and moved on by an arm of *everlasting strength*.

The day of Pentecost assures us, that Jehovah regards the kingdom of his Son with supreme affection; and that all his perfections are engaged for its defence and enlargement. If otherwise, why at the period of its peculiar trial, did he not abandon it? Why did he grant to its supporters the gift of tongues? Why impart to their ministrations such a resistless energy? The language of this favor to the infant church is too plain to be misunderstood. It gave to her a pledge of unchanging friendship: so that she has nothing to fear from the malice or the power of millions leagued against her. *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.*

But if such friendship and power be pledged for Christ's kingdom, we must say that man never assumes an attitude of greater folly, than when he sets himself to oppose its progress. Let him hush the raging tempest: let him calm the rocking deep: let him arrest the sun in his march of grandeur through the heavens: let him subvert the throne of the Eternal; then will we cease to pity the deluded man, who hopes to injure the kingdom of Immanuel. His warfare is with Omnipotence; and he had better desist from the controversy at once, and, like Paul, stand forth a champion of the faith he would destroy. He might thus avoid hours, ages, an *eternity* of mortification, as well as anguish. For christianity, *in its purity*, must visit every land, province, and village, not merely to learn the condition of mankind, but to establish her empire. She shall achieve one victory after another, over ignorance, prejudice, and corruption; and in one land and province after another, fix her standard, till a voice from heaven shall proclaim, *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.*

And never has the christian cause pressed on more swiftly to such a consummation, than at this very moment. Jehovah is most manifestly coming forth in his strength to build up Zion. Copious showers of heavenly influence are even now descending.

Ten thousand streams are contributing to swell that river of God which is to water the whole earth. We can see the empire of Christ fast rising and spreading. To resist the claims of christianity at such a period, then, under a cloak of infidelity or covenantousness, or to think of degrading the Holy One of Israel, can be regarded only as most consummate *folly*.

4. The occurrences of the day of Pentecost exhibit THE GRAND MEANS of advancing the cause of Christ, and saving sinners.

Jehovah has revealed the determination to spread his truth over the earth, and to rescue a countless multitude from spiritual and eternal death. We cannot but be aware of his ability to do this, independently of human aid. He can, by his Spirit, enlighten and sanctify the whole world in the twinkling of an eye. He is nevertheless pleased to accomplish his designs of mercy, by the intervention of MEANS. And the grand means he has appointed, as developed on the day of Pentecost, are *the ministrations of the gospel*. In connection with these, the triumphs of that day were gained.

It is not doubted that other means, auxiliary, may be usefully employed. Divine truth, in whatever way presented to the mind, may become the instrument of sanctification. We read instances of the *sacred volume* having gone to regions trod by no christian teacher's foot, and there disclosing the perfections, and urging the claims of Jehovah with important effect. Often has a *religious tract* been the commissioned angel of saving mercy. Often has a *sudden death*, a burst of *thunder*, or other providential occurrence, impressed some truth of God with everlasting solemnity on the soul.

Still these means of grace may be only subordinate in importance to the ministrations of God's special appointment. *It pleased God by the foolishness of PREACHING to save them that believe*. If divine influence has in any place distilled, as dew upon Hermon, and the church risen in strength and beauty, it has been in connection with the appropriate labors of the sacred office. Eighteen centuries ago the gospel went forth from Jerusalem on an embassy of mingled authority and love. It has traversed the globe. And under its influence the stupid pagan has renounced his rites; the sensualist his scenes of low crime; the proud have been humbled; the desponding cheered; the Savior has received the homage and confidence of millions; and heaven has obtained steady accessions to the number of its purified and happy population. But where has the gospel achieved any extended triumphs, except as its truths have been explained and urged by an ambassador for Christ?

Who will doubt the pre-eminent importance of the christian ministry as a means of salvation, when he looks at the divine sanction it received on the day of Pentecost? The ministrations of that day were the first public efforts under the commission, *Preach the gospel to every creature—beginning at Jerusalem.* And the signal success bade the devoted apostles go forward in the sacred enterprise of proclaiming a crucified and ascended Savior. And to the church at large it addresses a similar language. Let her then train up her sons of promise for the sacred office; let her plant a spiritual watchman in every village of the territory she now claims; and let her despatch her heralds of truth to all the revolted nations under heaven.

From the day of Pentecost we also learn, *what kind of preaching* is fitted to accomplish the gracious designs of heaven. The grand theme of Peter's discourse was *Jesus of Nazareth*—his character, life, death, resurrection, and supremacy. He failed not to exhibit distinctly the sovereignty—the *determinate counsel*—as well as foreknowledge of God; while, with the same breath, he pressed on his hearers the conviction of *personal guilt*. He urged the duty of *immediate* repentance, and the necessity of a cordial faith in the Savior, as *both Lord and Christ*. On these several topics he spake with the utmost boldness. He could charge upon his hearers the crime of murdering God's beloved Son. He could say that they perpetrated the deed with *wicked hands*. And it was from a sense of *guilt*, as well as danger, that they trembled.

Unwelcome as were the topics of that discourse, it was adapted to accomplish the objects of the christian ministry, as appeared from the result. Thus sanctioned, it is obviously worthy of the careful attention of all who minister at God's altar. From it let them learn what should be the grand theme of their ministrations:—*Jesus Christ*, his character and offices: From it let them learn, what should ever be a leading object—to make men *feel* that they are *guilty*: From it let them learn to proclaim explicitly and fearlessly the whole character of God, and the exact message with which they are charged from him. In so doing they may awaken the rancor of a sour unbelief; they may disturb the repose of a heedless impenitence; they may call forth the loud clamor, *This is an hard saying; who can bear it?* But they may also be ministers of *salvation*, and contribute something to swell the honors of their King. Possibly, like Peter, they may "open the gate of heaven to a multitude of sinners."

Instead of being followers of inspired apostles, they *can* consult the prejudices and caprices of a world lying in sin. They *can*

keep aloof from the cross of the despised Lamb, and the terrors of the burning mount. They *can* cast a veil over the blackness of human depravity, and amuse when they ought to alarm. And for their reward they may receive the liberal caresses of the gay and the proud. But what will such men have accomplished for Christ, their Master—or for the happiness of their hearers, when the visions of time shall have given place to the realities of eternity? Who will be led to ponder on the mighty interests of the soul, the solemnity of death, the awfulness of judgment, and the duration of future joy or wo? Who will be led to weep over his sins, to seek counsel from the page of revelation, or to unburden an oppressed heart in the closet of prayer? What youth will become tired of his pursuits of gaiety and folly? What votary of ambition will stop in his eager chase after a phantom? or what man of sordid avarice will chastise his idolatry, and pant for a treasure in heaven? It is not *every* ministry that is fitted to reclaim the wayward; to restore to the human heart the lost image of God, and to prepare the sinner for a future crown. It is only the ministry of the *gospel*—that ministry which makes a full disclosure of whatever is humbling in the doctrines, and terrible in the sanctions, as well as cheering in the invitations and promises of the New Testament. And the usefulness of *such* a ministry was strikingly illustrated on that day, when the multitude were pricked in their hearts, and inquired, with no ordinary solicitude, what they should do, and wept over their sins, and submitted to God, and looked up with *a hope full of immortality*.

Wonder not, then, sinner, if the minister of Jesus, who would save himself and them that hear him, and who has such *examples* before him, does feel it his duty to tear away the miserable veils which hide men from themselves, and to exhibit the unchanging majesty of God's law, and the deep damnation that must engulf the impenitent and unbelieving! *For herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.*

5. The occurrences of the day of Pentecost exhibit the christian minister's GRAND SOURCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

The apostles understood the nature of God's moral administration. They felt their utter incompetency to maintain the christian cause in their own strength, but were still aware of the necessity of using the instituted means. Relying solely on the promise of the Savior, *they were all with one accord in one place*—presenting doubtless a united and fervent supplication to heaven for the aid they needed. Filled with the Holy Ghost, they ventured to preach—they *spake forth the words*



*of truth and soberness.* And that same Spirit of truth carried their message with renovating power to the hearts and consciences of their hearers.

The ground of their success teaches, that the minister's grand source of encouragement, in all his labours, is *the promised influence of the Spirit.* He needs other aid than the man of merely secular business. He needs something more than the common blessing of the Most High. There is a peculiarity in the character of his work, which renders necessary a peculiarity in the agency of the Spirit. He seeks to convert mankind from the love and practice of iniquity to the love and service of God; to raise to a spiritual life such as are *dead in trespasses and sins.* The carnal mind is *enmity against God*—destitute of a single trace of its Maker's moral image. This enmity must be *slain*; and in its place must be substituted that *holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

To effect so entire a transformation of character, what human powers are adequate? Talents may dazzle, reasoning may confound, eloquence may charm and move, fortitude and zeal may press through a thousand disheartening difficulties; but *God only can convert.* *Not by might, nor by power, but by my SPIRIT, saith the Lord of hosts.* From this position, however, let the *sinner* make no other inference than that of the exceeding *sinfulness* and *obstinacy* of his own heart, which will yield only to Omnipotent Grace. It is nothing but *ingratitude* and *stubbornness of guilt*, that prevents his yielding at once *to the convictions of truth*, and giving his whole heart to God. So that, if left to perish in his obstinacy, he dies without excuse, and in the day of reckoning will be speechless. Let him not, then, aggravate his guilt by now *charging God foolishly.*

To the feebleness of merely human effort, in attempting to convert the sinner, experience bears most humiliating testimony. Within the compass of our charge is many a man of business, and many a youth of folly, on whom our eye of deep concern has often been fixed. We have noticed, with agony, their increasing aversion to the ways of God, and their increasing attachment to an unsatisfying world. We have hoped, all the while, that very soon some message from the throne of God might be the means of rousing their torpid sensibilities, and changing the current of their affections: but they never were devoted more exclusively and intensely to objects of a transitory nature, than at this moment. Gladly would we dissolve the spell by which they are bound; but their persevering unholiness, and their heedlessness about the eternal interests of the soul, proclaim to us the utter insufficiency of our efforts.

Not only, however, is the almighty Spirit the Christian minister's grand source of encouragement; it is a very *fruitful* source. Apart from

the special influence of the Spirit, the apostles had little indeed to encourage—and every thing to damp their hopes, and paralyze their energies. Yet they were not disheartened. They called to mind the precious promises of their Lord, and on them fastened their hope. They braved the contempt and opposition of thousands; and in their presence the strength of man became weakness, and the loftiness of man was abased.

Those promises which sustained apostles are ground of *perpetual* encouragement. Lo, I am with you *always*, even unto the *end of the world*. Here then we see Omnipotence pledged to make the ministry of reconciliation an engine of resistless moral power, till *time shall be no longer*. Toils, vexations, and trials attend it; but so do peculiar consolations. Oh, it is cheering to reflect, that though man can neither convert nor convince, there is a power on high which *can* clothe his ministrations with almighty energy. A power it is, that can humble the proudest spirit. It can soften the hardest heart. It can extort from the most careless, in a moment, the inquiry of deep concern. It can instantaneously shed over our worshipping assembly the solemnity of the second death; and thrill every heart with the resistless mandate, *Awake thou that sleepest*. Nor is this a mere matter of ability. There is no degree of thoughtlessness, which it has not actually alarmed. There is no stubbornness of depravity, which it has not subdued,—as it has gone along with the ministrations of the sanctuary.

With such ground of encouragement, we will preach in hope. We will continue to illustrate and enforce the great truths of Christianity, relying for the fruit of our labours, on that Spirit of power and grace, whose prerogative it is to quicken and sanctify. With the sword of the Spirit, *which is the word of God*, we will continue to urge our appeals to the heart and conscience, till our voice shall become silent in the grave. And could we rise, hereafter, with the great multitude found *faithful unto death*; we would still say, with every creature in heaven—*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name, give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*

One other lesson from the events of the day of Pentecost, and we have done.

#### 6. The occurrences of that day exhibit the REALITY and IMPORTANCE of REVIVALS OF RELIGION.

By a Revival of religion, we understand, *an uncommon and general interest on the subject of salvation, produced by the Holy Spirit, through*

*the instrumentality of Divine truth.* The work is very commonly preceded by a prevailing and affecting coldness on the subject of personal religion : such as leads Christians to feel the necessity of extraordinary prayer for themselves as well as others. In its progress, the thoughtless are alarmed ; convinced of their guilt ; inquire what they shall do ; receive Jesus as their Saviour ; rejoice in hope of future glory ; join themselves to the people of God ; and, in important respects, pursue a new course of life.

Such, substantially, was the Revival on the day of Pentecost. With the history of that day before us, we see thousands assemble, with no special solicitude about their souls ; and many of them very decided in their opposition to Christianity. We see the same men, soon after, most deeply interested on the subject of salvation. We see them, in the anguish of awakened conscience, at the feet of despised apostles, inquiring what they must do. We see them resorting, with penitence and faith, to the mediation of Christ for pardon. We see them joining themselves to the little band of disciples ; and devoting their influence and possessions to the cause of the Gospel. We ascribe that memorable work to the special agency of God's Spirit ; and denominate it a *Revival of religion*. And when, in these latter days, and these ends of the earth, we witness a work of *similar character*, we feel bound to ascribe it to the same *Cause* ; and think it proper to give to it the same name. We can perceive no good reason, why the former should be regarded as the work of God, and the latter as the work exclusively of man.

Do you say, that the excitement, denominated a Revival of religion, occurs in connexion with the special efforts of Christians ? We answer, that the excitement on the day of Pentecost occurred in a similar connexion. When has a band of Christians been more united and fervent ? Or when has a minister of Christ pressed the subject of religion with more plainness, pungency, and zeal, than did Peter, and his brethren ? And again we reply, that God's instituted mode of extending the blessings of salvation, is through the faithful efforts of his servants. *If thou speakest not to warn the wicked of his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand.*

Do you say, that the divine influence to which we allude, as to the *mode* of its operation, is enveloped in the darkness of *mystery* ? So it was on the day of Pentecost. So is the *universal presence* of the Supreme a mystery. And so does a cloud of impenetrable obscurity hang over the *mode* of *all* his operations. If mystery must produce skepticism, tells us, where will your doubtings end ?

Do you say, there is enthusiasm connected with the excitement, denominated a Revival of religion ? Enthusiasm there sometimes may

have been. *Fanaticism* there may have been. But does such a fact prove the entire absence of genuine religion? Does it prove that no Revival is a sober, rational work? Possibly, had you lived eighteen centuries ago, you might, in pity, have pronounced Peter an enthusiast! and the events of the day of Pentecost a scene of wild phrenzy! But possibly, too, some *centuries hereafter*, you may mourn, too late, your *own madness*. Are not *you* the *enthusiast*, if you hope to enter heaven, despising the command of heaven's King!—*Strive to enter in at the straight gate. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence.*

Do you say, that in a time of general excitement there will be instances of gross imposition on the Church? So it was in the Pentecost revival; when, in awful warning to hypocrites, Ananias and Sapphira fell down dead. But did their hypocrisy close the door of heaven against the thousands who sincerely repented? Or did it lessen their abhorrence of sin? or their everlasting gratitude to Him who made them to differ?

Do you say, that the excitement, denominated a Revival of religion, is often succeeded by instances of apostasy? We answer, that apostacies have likewise occurred under other circumstances. Of them the Church was forewarned by its Head, when he declared, *It must needs be that offences come.* And from the little band, collected by Himself in person, there was an apostate as vile as the Church ever embosomed. But did the perfidy of Judas disprove the sincerity of the rest? And if a Revival has been succeeded by defection, which evinces the hypocrisy or delusion of some, what does their fall prove, one way or the other, as to the religion of others?

In the progress of our experience, relating to such seasons of attention, we *have seen* circumstances which furnished overwhelming evidence of God's special presence. We have stood in awe of His majesty, in view of the general solemnity that reigned around us: a solemnity produced by no visible cause, other than the ordinary means of grace. We *have seen* the tide of gaiety and folly at once arrested, the loftiest look brought low, and the stoutest heart melted in penitence. We *have seen* the man of *morals*—intrenched for more than half a century within his refuges of lies, and dreaming of no danger—suddenly waked from his delusion, and—fearfully alarmed at the insecurity of his hiding-place—finding no rest, day nor night, till in the Ark of Safety. We *have seen* the slave of *appetite* and *lust* raised up from the debasement of a ruined fortune and character, and rescued as from the very *gate of hell!* We have seen him, afterwards, shining in the beauty of holiness, regaining the full confidence of community, and elevating his affections to the throne of God! And when we have witnessed facts like these, and have been aware of no other visible cause, than a plain, but calm exhi-

bition of Evangelical truth—we have instinctively exclaimed, *The work, O Lord, is thine ; and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

But, not only does the day of Pentecost evince the *reality* of Revivals of religion ; it furnishes reason to calculate on their existence, in all ages. Commencing as they did with the very commencement of Christianity, there was reason to believe they would accompany her in her march over the world. On such displays of Divine grace were fixed the hopes of the apostles. Nor in their expectations were they disappointed. The very first sermon preached by Peter in a *Gentile* province, was attended with similar effects. *The Holy Ghost came on all them that heard the word.* In proclaiming the Gospel, the apostles urged, as a motive to repentance, the animating fact, that *the times of refreshing had come from the presence of the Lord.* And by such repeated displays of Divine grace were they sustained, and peculiarly encouraged in their holy enterprise.

Ours is likewise an age of religious revival. Each passing year gives to it this character in still more distinctive features. And doubtless as the period of Zion's universal triumph comes on, these showers of God's grace will exhibit still greater majesty and power. The victories of the Spirit will become more and more extended, as well as illustrious. All Christendom is yet to be overshadowed by one vast cloud of Divine influence. Lands, doomed for generations to a state of moral darkness and death, shall be watered and made fruitful, *like the garden of God.* And in the holy City itself, *now trodden down of the Gentiles,* shall be repeated those displays of power and grace, which attended the first preaching of the Cross.

The occurrences of the day of Pentecost exhibit likewise the *importance* of Revivals of religion. If they are actually of God, we know that their influence must be only salutary. Look back then to that memorable Revival, which ushered in the Christian ministry ; and tell us if its influence was at all otherwise than salutary. On the very day of its commencement, about three thousand were turned from darkness to light : and, during its continuance, *the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.* Were they less honest, sober, benevolent, than before their conversion ? Or were they less qualified for the dread trial of the Last Day ? In a single day, it gave to the Christian Church a weight of influence, more than a hundred fold greater than it had previously possessed. And whilst it gave new impulse to her efforts, it was the occasion of dismay to her opposers. The testimony it bore to the dignity of Jesus, and the truth of Christianity, will exert a blessed influence forever.

The happy influence of a Revival may be viewed, distinctly, in its effects, on individual happiness ; on the interests of the community ; and on the general cause of religion.

It is important to *individual* happiness. Such religious character as it creates is the only safe pledge of a peaceful life. You can spare the aggrandizements of wealth, and the parade of earthly distinction. But, in this world of disease, disappointment, and death, you *can not* spare the consolations of a Christian hope. But a single glance into *eternity* stamps immeasurable value on the religious character which is originated in a season of Revival. Oh, beware of risking the trial of the Great Day, in any other character, than that which produced by the transforming Spirit. You may have passed through a season of religious attention, and in it become a happy subject of God's grace. Others may attach to it a trivial importance ; but by yourself it shall be recurred to with ecstasy, and with thanksgiving to God, when the heavens shall be no more.

A religious Revival exerts a happy influence on the *community at large*. The Gospel and the sanctifying Spirit, wherever they enter, enlighten, elevate, and purify. Their dominion over the heart secures a regularity of deportment, an industrious improvement of time, a scrupulous discharge of the varied duties of life. Often has a short period of the Spirit's gracious operation allayed the asperity of contention ; calmed the tumult of a noisy rabble ; put an end to scenes of midnight wickedness ; brought relief to dwellings of domestic want and wo ; and greatly elevated the intellectual, as well as moral character of society.

On the *general cause of religion* the influence of a Revival is immense, as well as salutary. The happy influence is not circumscribed by the limits of the Spirit's immediate operation. It may reach to the ends of the earth—and onward through time. It may be the commencing link in a chain of operations, which shall issue in the rescue of millions from the agonies of the second death.

Revivals hasten the universal triumph of the Gospel. Let the Churches of Christendom be found, this year, *with one accord* pleading the Redeemer's great promise—Let every city and village be a theatre of Revivals, like that in which Peter and his associates were the visible agents,—and it would be the ushering in of millennial glory.

If then the work we are contemplating be indeed a work of God ; and if such be its influence on *individual happiness*—on the interests of *society*—and on the *general cause of religion*,—O give to it, Christian brethren, the full ardour of your affections and prayers. Go to the place of secret communion with God, to the domestic altar, to the social meeting, to the sanctuary of the Most High, with the effectual fervent peti-

tion,—*O Lord, revive thy work.* Do you ask for encouragement? Know that He has declared himself more ready to grant the Holy Spirit, than parents are to give good gifts to their children. Do you need examples of devotedness? Fix your eye on those holy apostles—who, after having turned thousands to righteousness, were counted worthy to suffer *martyrdom* for the name of Christ. *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.* Do you lack motive? Open your eye upon the *scepe* that lies within the compass of your vision.—Perhaps religion is languishing. Perhaps the commandments of God are openly violated. Perhaps the world, in its varied forms of attraction, is the all-engrossing object. Perhaps the tide of population is pressing on in a direction ominous of a dreary eternity. Ascend some lofty eminence, and extend your view over the earth. Mark the territory enlightened by Revelation, and reclaimed from the destroyer;—how small it is! Leave for a moment this world, so soon to be wrapped in consuming fire, and approach the Celestial. Survey the glory, and hearken to the hosannas of the saved. Then look down on the awful contrast!—and onward beyond the Judgment scene! Under the influence of what you have discovered—go back to your devotions. And, like the weeping Prophet, who beheld these realities with more than mortal eye, in God's strength make your firm resolve,—that *for Zion's sake you will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.*

We are not so visionary as to expect an unusual success in the progress of religion, unless there are unusual omens. But, says one of the brightest spirits of England, “A most emphatical spirit of prayer would be such an omen. And the individual, who should solemnly determine to try its last possible efficacy, might probably find himself becoming a much more prevailing agent in his little sphere. And if the whole, or greater number, of the disciples of Christianity, were, with an earnest, unalterable resolution of each, to combine that Heaven should not withhold one single influence which the very utmost effort of conspiring and persevering supplication would obtain, it would be the sign that a revolution of the world was at hand.”

Nor can I suppress the consideration, that, even now, there are signs, which seem to afford peculiar encouragement to such special and united prayer for a universal Revival. It was a striking proof of the determination of Heaven to spread the Gospel through the world, that Jerusalem should have been selected as the place, and the day of Pentecost as the season, for the first great out-pouring of the Spirit: because a blow then and there struck could not fail to tell with emphasis on all the surrounding nations. So, in our own day, it is a sig-

nal from Heaven, of no ordinary import, that the Spirit is actually descending in power on several of our large Cities and towns, as well as on Colleges and Seminaries of learning. The consequence of which is, that men of wealth and extended influence are brought to *count all things but loss for Christ*; and champions of truth and heralds of salvation are thus multiplied. At the same time, the Missionary channels, which are daily opening, and the Religious Publications, which are circulating, by thousands and by tens of thousands, afford facilities of communication, altogether unparalleled in the history of Christ's kingdom. So that now, as on the day of Pentecost, the influence of a great Revival might be at once felt through the world. Let, then, the whole multitude of disciples now *lift up their eyes unto the Heavens*; let them say with one accord,—*Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live,—that thy way may be known upon earth, and thy saving health among all nations.*

And now, ye commissioned *servants of the Living God*, this whole subject speaks with solemn emphasis to you and to me. But here, I am aware, it becomes a young man to be reserved. I will only repeat the words of one, whom, like Peter, the Spirit of God hath greatly honoured.—“How soon, my brethren, will the amazing realities of Judgment and Eternity break upon our unearthly vision, and fill us either with ecstasy or despair! I cast my thoughts forward but a little, and behold, the dead are rising, the elements melting, saints rejoicing, devils trembling. The Judge appears upon his great white throne—In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we are before the judgment seat, with our respective flocks. The faithful and the unfaithful shepherds of every age are there. The trial proceeds, the books are closed, the final sentence is pronounced. The heavens are opened, and the pit yawns—the eternal song and the eternal wail are both begun. O may we then rise, with a great multitude saved through our unworthy instrumentality, to shine with them, *as the brightness of the firmament—as the stars forever and ever.*” AMEN.